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The Wanderings of the Hermit
of Westminster



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The Wanderings

of

The Hermit of Westminster

between

New York & San Francisco



THE DOMES, YOSEMITE.

In the Autumn of 1881.

By

R. P. Spice, C.E., F.R.G.S.

Printed for Private Circulation.

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AUSTRIJAS NOVINKA
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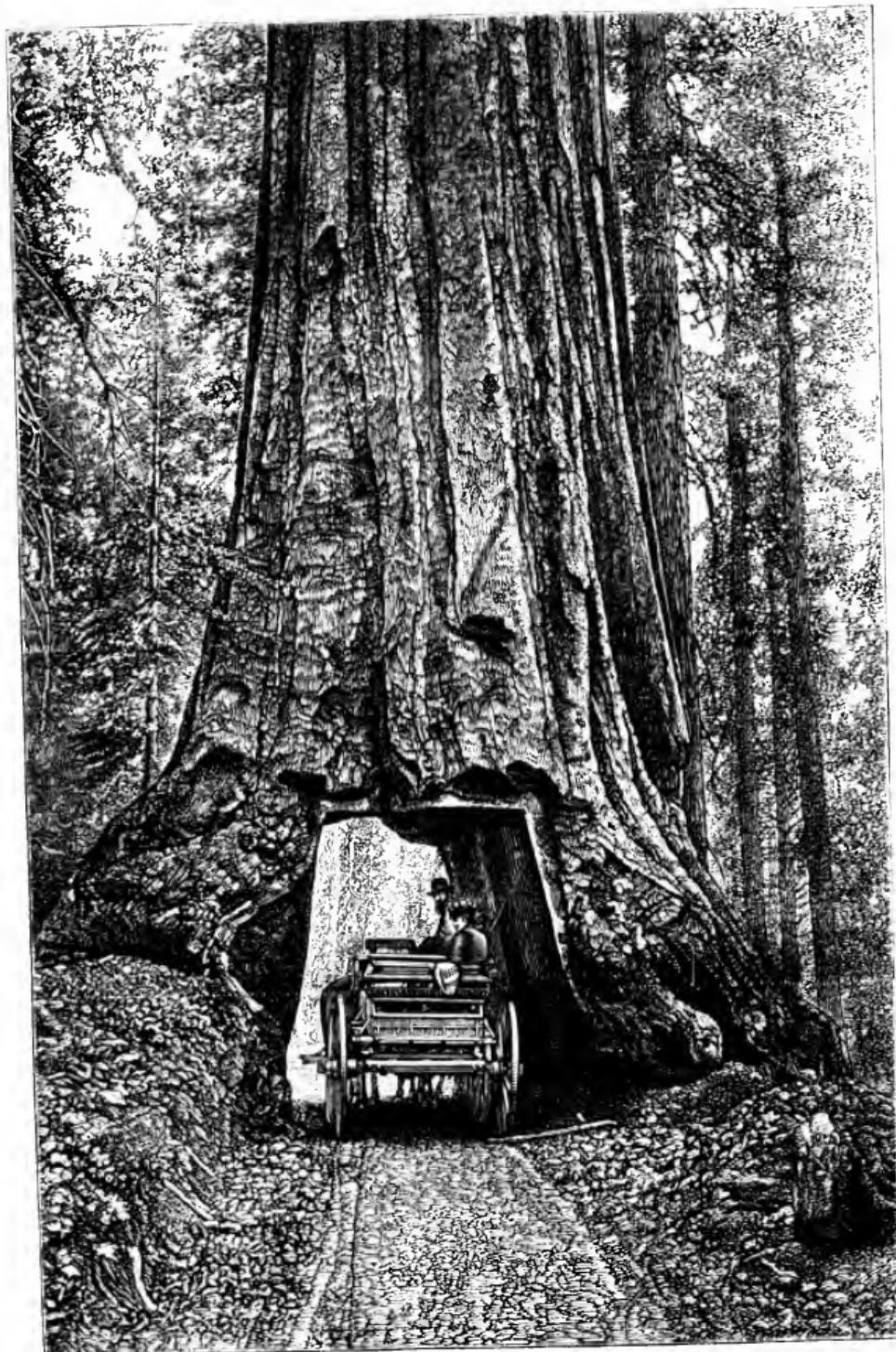
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Sequoia Gigantea. Wawona (27 ft. diameter), Mariposa Grove, California.



NEVADA FALLS, YOSEMITE.

CHAPTER I.

NEW YORK TO NIAGARA AND CHICAGO.

FHE highways of the World have been so greatly improved, and its rough paths made so smooth in recent times, that it is no longer difficult to visit places, which, a short time since, would have been considered to be, geographically, far beyond the reach of ordinary mortals who might be desiring to add to their stock of knowledge and experience by extended travel.

With these impressions afloat in his mind, the Hermit of Westminster resolved that his autumn holiday this

year should be devoted to a tour across the great continent of North America.

This being settled, he engaged a berth on board a "Cunarder," from Liverpool to New York and home again, and sailed on his outward voyage on the 13th August.

The voyage need not be described, it being now a common event in the lives of so many; and it is perfectly marvellous in how short a time it has come to be a fact, that people think nothing of just stepping on board one or other of the ships of the several fleets of "American Liners," crossing the Atlantic, and making themselves perfectly at home on either side of that mighty ocean; and thus it has come about, that the stream of voyagers is constant in both directions all the year round.

What this stream will be, as time rolls on, it is difficult to imagine, swelling and augmenting as it constantly has been and is. The great Steamship Companies who do this international carrying trade, are giving substantial evidence of their faith in its permanent vitality, by providing for the future, magnificent vessels of more than double the capacity and power of those hitherto employed.

Well, after a pleasant voyage on board the good ship "Algeria," the Hermit landed at New York, where he was warmly welcomed by those dear to him, and soon found himself comfortably located with them in a suburb of the city of Brooklyn.

The following four days were devoted to sight-seeing in New York; a trip to Coney Island, a dinner there, and a visit to that noted seat of fashion, and luxurious seaside flirtation ground, "Long Branch," and a dinner

also ;—alas ! what would these places be without that humanizing institution, the body-sustaining and soul-inspiring dinner ?

As for New York, the Hermit's impression was, that it is well worthy of its great reputation as a vast commercial emporium. On all sides, and in all directions, the pushing, driving, go-ahead spirit of the people is unmistakeably exhibited. As a rule, the merchants' warehouses, in the principal and side streets alike, are not capacious enough for their trade ; no matter, the trade has to be done, so what there is not room for inside is piled up without any ceremony *outside* ; and there you see packing-cases innumerable, placed on the footways from the kerbstone inwards, till only a passage is left for foot passengers to pass in Indian file ! This struck the Hermit as being an extremely inconvenient practice ; but then the New York folks are used to it, and apparently are reconciled to it ; so, having observed the peculiar custom he went on his way, wondering where, in America, the line is drawn between private rights and public wrongs.

He was also struck with the astonishingly rough character of the paving of the City, and could not imagine a reason for the maintenance of such a state of things as he observed in existence. The style took one back, in imagination, quite as far as the Middle Ages ; and it is to be hoped that the City Surveyor will not let his pride stand in the way, to prevent his taking a lesson on street paving from the Hermit's friend Colonel Heywood, of the City of London, under whose skilful hand, modern City roadways have been brought up to a condition leaving little more to be desired.

Concerning the public buildings and commercial palaces of New York, it would be impertinent to speak in any other than terms of unqualified praise. And as for monster hotels, as complete and perfect as they are extensive and sumptuous, all the world knows that, in that line, America has whopped all creation.

Leaving the City by the Fifth Avenue, the Hermit drove to the Central Park, of which the New York people may well be proud, for it is a masterpiece of landscape gardening on a grand scale. At once lovely and picturesque, with roads and paths simply perfect, and as well kept as any private property of the same character can well be ; open to all for recreation and enjoyment, and well calculated to elevate the moral tone of the people. Here may be seen, exhibited to advantage, the trotting horses for which America is famous, shown off as they are in well-built equipages, smartly appointed, as often driven by ladies as gentlemen ; and many of these "turn-outs" are seductively elegant.

And now, after this cursory glance, let us leave New York for the present, and set out on our tour into and across the country. Starting one fine morning on board one of the world-renowned river steamboats, or floating palaces as they have not inaptly been called, the Hermit went up that river of rivers, the Hudson, as far as Albany ; and much as he loves the Upper Rhine, he must award the palm to the Hudson, for natural beauty, minus the old castles in picturesque ruins, pointing backward as they do to times long gone by, when Might too often prevailed over Right.

Landing at Albany, he put up at the Delavan House ;

and next morning, by the aid of a carriage and pair of horses, he saw the principal objects of interest, including the Park, the Capitol, the Governor's house, and the new Post Office (for particulars of which see the guide-books), and then set off for one of the most extravagant places of fashionable resort on the face of the earth, namely, "Saratoga Springs," and here he drove to the Grand Union Hotel, which has twelve acres of carpeting, and a dining-room 275 feet long. This is one of several of the sumptuous caravanseries of a palatial character, where guests are there provided for by the thousand.

Here, in his quiet way, the Hermit took stock of the manners, habits, and customs, of American fashionable society at its favourite summer resort, and the conclusion he arrived at was, that as an outlet for superfluous cash it is probably without a rival. Undoubtedly a well-dressed lady is justly an object of admiration, and here such objects are to be seen by the hundred daily; and the hundreds may safely be multiplied by five to get at the number of dresses, for nothing is more common than for a lady to appear here in five or six different dresses every day in the week, so that one dress may be a "sweet thing," another "really lovely," another "awfully good," and another "too utterly utter," "too crystally precious," and so on. As for the display of diamonds, a stranger might be excused if he guessed that the mines of Golconda were close by, and that the sparkling gems might be picked up just by way of amusement.

Having dined, and had his drive to "the lake" and back, seen some excellent specimens of American trotting horses on the road, and strolled about late in the evening

amidst the gay throng in the halls of dazzling light, listening the while to the strains of sweet music which lent a charm to the scene ; the Hermit, having a habit of looking for the brightest side and the best points of a picture, indulged in cogitations upon the inherent advantages of the maintenance of such a social centre as this, and of indulging in such tastes and habits.

No doubt, money is made in the American marts of commerce in fabulously large amounts and very quickly ; but it is scarcely possible that every speculator should become a Vanderbilt, and find amusement, as that financial Colossus does, in building palaces for himself and his sons and daughters, and buying railroads with the view of annihilating dividends on one stock and increasing those of another, for strategical purposes unfathomable to the common understanding ; what, therefore, is a comparatively poor man to do, with only his half million or million per annum, if he cannot have the luxury of spending it in the maintenance of an establishment such as shall outshine that of some other less powerful financial luminary ; and, in the resorts of fashion, indulging in tastes and habits which can only be efficiently maintained by the "almighty dollar" ?

And then, again, what would the diamond merchant, the goldsmith, the silk mercer, the milliner, the coach and harness maker, and all their dependents do, if they were not duly patronized by such members of society as those who fill the magnificent hotels of charming Saratoga.

After this survey and study of men and manners, the Hermit set out again for quite another scene—the Falls of Niagara—a step, as it were, from the frivolous to the sublime. He arrived there rather late one evening

and stopped at the Cataract House, the bedroom which was allocated to him commanding a view of the rapids immediately above the Falls.

There was something indescribably delicious in hearing, as he did for the first time, the sound of the rush of this mighty torrent, intensified as it was by the awful roar of the Falls a little further on, and these sounds lulled the Hermit to sleep.

"Sweetly refreshing, balmy slumbers," in a room on the brink of the impetuous current, with the window open,—his feelings revolting against shutting out the pure air or the music of the falling water; and then, in early morn, before the dew had been dispelled by the rising sun, the soul-inspiring view of the sublimely grand natural scenery, which he looked upon with feelings of enchantment, will never be obliterated from his memory.

A bath and breakfast having been had in due course, our Hermit set out in a one-horse buggy to visit Goat Island, which is reached by a bridge thrown over the rapids, connecting it with the main land, and here he obtained his first view of the Falls in all their unspeakable majesty, which cannot be fully described in words, nor so depicted by the brush of the painter, as to convey to the mind those impressions, which can only be obtained by oft-repeated observations from different points of view, with Niagara before you face to face.

Treating of the Falls as one, it seemed to the Hermit that to measure, and talk, and write about its volume, its depth, its width, and its quantity, in feet and tons and gallons, as some folks delight to do, is to take a liberty with the subject, and to reduce it to the level of a

common thing; and as for arguing in favour of interfering with it in a grovelling utilitarian spirit, by diverting any portion of the power and applying it to mere money making purposes, he would stigmatize it as downright snobbishness.

The Hermit spent three days in making himself familiar with this manifestation of the creative power of the Great Architect of the Universe; and while giving up the task of describing it, as utterly hopeless, he cannot leave the subject without expressing an earnest hope, that the two Governments of the United States and Canada, will shortly come to an agreement and pass an Act through each Legislature, the effect of which shall be, to provide for the redemption of this natural wonder of the world, from the abominations which in modern times have sprung up on both sides of it—abominations which are painful to witness—such as a number of shops called “Bazaars,” or “Indian Stores,”—traps for the unwary—and penny peep show concerns in grounds called a park, the entrance fee to which is 25 cents, and this “lion in your path” guards the entrance to the edge or side of the American Fall; thus is the majesty of this Fall insulted by authorised and regulated beggary, and at night it is trifled with by the childish exhibition of the Electric Light, which is twirled about by operators, and varied at times with bits of coloured glass in front, the colours being made to reflect upon the surface of the waters.

Nor is this all; a visitor to Niagara cannot show himself outside his hotel without being badgered by touts and carriage drivers, nor can he move without being taxed on all sides for tolls, which are interposed

between him and almost every object he may wish to see.

Let us hope the time is very near, when all these Little Pedlington interests will be bought up by the two nations, the shores cleared of all such wretched excrescences, and sufficient ground secured on each side for a National Park, worthy of each country, made free and maintained for ever, for the people of each, and for those of all other countries on the face of the earth.



CHAPTER II.

CHICAGO TO CHEYENNE AND SALT LAKE CITY.

NOW for Chicago, the enterprising and wonderful ; not so long ago the home of the Red Indian and the buffalo ; then the small outlying station, and then the embryo town—then destroyed by fire—only to be rebuilt on a larger scale—and then again annihilated by the devouring element, only to reappear, Phœnix-like, from its ashes with increased splendour, and with a growing reputation for mercantile superiority of an almost unexampled type ; earned by an all-conquering spirit, which constantly impels its merchant princes and men of business generally, onward in the course which has most unmistakeably distinguished the progress of this busy hive of human industry.

And there it stands to-day, on the shore of Lake Michigan, the grand emporium of the food products of the far west and the merchandise of the east ; the current of its commerce flowing in all directions, well worthy of admiration as a city in all respects, excepting only two, namely, the paving of its streets, which is awfully slovenly and rough ; and the disposal of its sewage, which is delivered into the Lake from whence its water supply is drawn.

As regards the first of these two defects, the Hermit is of opinion that wood paving, properly laid, is the best of all known methods of maintaining a good surface in

the streets of cities ; providing as it does an easily maintainable road, favourable for either light or heavy carriage traffic, causing less wear and tear alike for vehicles and horses, with a minimum of inconvenience as regards cleanliness, and a maximum of comfort to passengers and residents ; but its success must in every case depend on the way in which the road is laid ; and in the case of Chicago, the authorities have failed through laying their blocks of wood on a bed of loose sand, which rests upon a subsoil composed of nobody knows what, but various in its component parts, and more unreliable, probably, than the sand.

Having seen a fresh specimen of wood paving in process of construction, in a fashionable quarter or suburb of the city, the Hermit observed at a glance, the glaring defect, and striking instance of the folly, which we read of in a good old book, of building on sand instead of rock ; and was quite satisfied that if, instead of paving on loose sand laid upon "rubbish shot here," a good foundation of concrete had been provided, the inhabitants of the luxuriously elegant villas on each side of the roadway, might be made happy, instead of miserable, by having a smooth surface to drive over instead of over hills and holes.

And as to the sewage question, which has been a trouble everywhere in populous towns and cities, ever since Bramah invented water-closets, if not before, it cannot be considered proper, as a matter of *taste*, to deliver it into a lake, within a short distance from whence the water is drawn for the supply of a city.

In the case of Chicago, the distance between the two points is just so little that the inconvenience has come

to be felt, in, to put it mildly, the diminished purity of the water; so much so that, as the Hermit was informed, the remedy is about to be tried of taking the water from a point in the lake some three miles or more further away from the shore, removing the evil to a greater distance in space of time, but leaving it to be dealt with again by a future generation, instead of incurring it may be a greater expense, in applying the more effectual remedy of putting the sewage on land instead of into a basin of water.

A few words in reference to the Stock-Yards of Chicago, which may be spoken of as an institution of a unique and marvellous description. Provision is here made for carrying on a continuous and gigantic trade in meat supply in all its various forms.

The cattle raised in millions on the boundless prairies and plains of the Western States, find a market here, and are dealt with on arrival by being driven into "pens," conveniently fitted with nearly twelve miles of troughs, kept constantly supplied with water and food, the entire area being rendered accessible by eight miles of divisional roads and alleys, available for the inspection of the animals by the mounted agents of the great firms engaged in the trade, and for whom they are bought; thence they are removed to the premises of these firms within "the yards," which cover an area of 345 acres, and there they are dealt with on what may be called principles of the highest class, regarded from a humanitarian point of view; bullocks being shot by experts with rifles, the shot being directed most skilfully from a few inches above each animal's back, into its spinal cord, effecting death without suffering.

As for hogs, they also, are cared for, if not tenderly, at least with commendable regard, their personal discomfort being reduced to as fine a point as may be compatible with their compulsory passage from life to death, and their ultimate distribution in whatever form, and to whatever part of the world they may be sent.

The trade done here in what are called "packing houses" is marvellous in its extent, the various ingeniously designed processes in constant operation in the "canning trade" being carried out with such undeviating method and skill, as to excite the admiration of all who take pleasure in the perfection of organisations, devised for the diminution of cost in the production of finished results, by the economical application of force. The Hermit was courteously shown over one of these houses, the most extensive concern of the kind in the world, belonging to Messrs. Armour & Co., having been kindly introduced to the firm by a gentleman engaged and doing a large business in a special branch of the trade, and whose acquaintance he made on the Atlantic ; and he found that in this establishment alone 1,500 men were employed in summer, and about 3,800 in winter; that 75,000 cattle and 1,500,000 hogs were killed per annum; 30 per cent. of the beef being canned,

And now began the reality of downright, full-blown railway travelling in an open country. The sensations of one whose previous experience may have been confined to easy going, short stage, European travel, are extremely novel when first crossing the prairies, plains and deserts of America, and bring into exercise all conceivable expedients to while away the often tedious and monotonous hours occupied in travelling over

boundless tracts of country destitute of hedges and trees. The miles are counted by hundreds, while the weary passenger consults his books, his aneroid, his maps, and his personal comfort, if, indeed, he can find any comfort except in anticipation ; and yet there is just so much of pleasant excitement every now and then, and so much to learn of the country, its characteristics, resources, and people, that a feeling of regret for having undertaken the task never enters one's mind ; it is simply a case of patient endurance, combined with the certainty of the end being well worth the means employed, and the fatigue encountered.

The mind dwells with increased satisfaction upon the impressive lessons learnt from rivers and rocks, mountains and plains, concerning the measureless past ; and speculations on the present and the future, as the train speeds along, in regard to the resources of the country, such as no amount of "reading up" can impart ; and when a feeling of weariness creeps over the traveller it is pleasant to take a nap, or turn to a book, which should always be at hand.

And then, when night comes, it is pleasant to find provision has been made for rest in a comfortable bed, the arrangement being such as to please even fastidious people. The interior of the car in which you travel through the day, resembles a handsome saloon, fitted with comfortable side seats, and at night it is quickly converted into a sleeping apartment; each traveller having a compartment separated from the adjoining one at each end by a partition, and shut in from observation on the side by a heavy curtain ; the whole being ingeniously contrived and exceedingly well made, the wood-work being of mahogany,

artistically inlaid with fancy woods, presenting excellent specimens of the cabinet maker's art.

Thus provided for, the traveller gets along with as little discomfort as is compatible with a railway journey of over 3,000 miles, extending from the Atlantic on the east, to the Pacific on the west, and it will be found that, under such circumstances, "a contented mind is a continual feast."

Having left Chicago far behind, the Hermit found himself in due time at Council Bluffs, and then at Omaha, and next at Cheyenne, where he spent a day and a night, but cannot advise anybody to go and do likewise. He was beguiled into the error of stopping at this place, by what he read of it in a guide-book, and could not help suspecting that the author was a special friend of the proprietor of the Hotel, which was set forth as being something quite out of the common, and so in a sense it is, for it was the only one which he had cause to be dissatisfied with in the United States.

Leaving Cheyenne, the Hermit started for Ogden, and on the way there passed through scenery which, for boldness and grandeur, is most remarkable. New features presented themselves in rapid succession. Snow sheds were first passed through at an elevation of 7,750 feet, and a Depôt called "Summit House" was a halting place at 8,350 feet above sea level, the next Station or Depôt being Laramie at 7,300 feet, and here supper is provided; and next day Ogden was reached in the evening, after a ride of two days and one night.

The Hermit left the main line train at Ogden, and proceeded by a branch line to Salt Lake City, the home of

the Mormons, and put up that night at the Walker House. The next day he took stock of the city, and by the aid of tram cars, and wandering about a little, he obtained an insight into all he cared to see, the great Tabernacle included, and left in the afternoon for Ogden again, *en route* for Sacramento and San Francisco.

The impressions created in his mind by his survey of "the City of the *Saints*," rendered notorious by the sensuous and cunning impostor Brigham Young, may be briefly stated thus. That the success of the founder of the Mormon Church in Utah, was due to the cunningly contrived agency which he employed, to delude, by the unscrupulous use of gross misrepresentation, the ignorant and poor, among the inhabitants of over populous countries in Europe; and having "converted" multitudes to the belief of their creed, the foundations of Mormonism were laid and built upon, to the enrichment of the leader and his officers; the poor dupes inveigled into the Mormon net, having to toil laboriously for the benefit (nominally) of the church, one-tenth of all earnings being compulsorily devoted to the fund controlled by the President, whose rule resembled that of a Despot, and who allowed no one to stand in the way, or thwart his designs.

By such means he became "rich beyond the bliss of dreams," providing for his sensuality by building luxurious villas for his wives, who each had a separate establishment—presumably to lessen the chances of an occasional free fight.

In the Great Tabernacle, which is provided for a congregation of 13,000 people, sermons and addresses of very various kinds are promiscuously delivered, just as

may suit the preacher's whim. The range of subjects appears to be boundless, and is said, by way of example, to include sermons or advice, upon the best manure for cabbages, the perseverance of the Saints, the wickedness of skimming milk before its sale, on bed-bug poison, teething in children, worms in dried peaches, and any possible thing which can be imagined.

They have a theatre as well as a tabernacle, the theatre being the property of the late President, Brigham Young; and one writer says he was present on one occasion when over thirty of the children of one of the Mormons sat in a row in the dress circle, and the private boxes were filled with his wives. The most striking event of this evening being the singing, by one of the performers, of the ditty—

" If Jim Fisk's rat-and-tan should have a bull-dog pup,
Do you think Louis Napoleon would try to bring him up?"

This, it is said by the same writer, elicited tremendous applause, and had to be repeated!

As to the commerce of the city, it is not to be denied that evidences of considerable energy are to be seen in its streets; but, as much of this is probably due to Gentiles as to Mormons, and the population has come to be nearly equally balanced; the Mormons, however, still having the upper hand in matters of civil administration.

The time, however, cannot be distant when this vulgar and huge imposture, whether in reference to its so-called religion or the practice of polygamy, must become a thing of the past; and it is scarcely creditable to the Government of the United States, that it has been allowed to exist so long as it has; it is at once an excrescence and an abomination.

But the despotic apostle of Mormonism, who till lately ruled over these people, is now no more; and those elders and officers who did his bidding, basked in the sunshine of his favour, and bowed down to him as their idol, will soon feel the loss of his genius and commanding influence.

President Taylor now reigns in his stead, and whether the supreme government interferes or not, if he lives a few years, he will find the abominable institution crumbling beneath his feet, and yielding, as it inevitably must, to the superior and irresistible power of advancing civilization.

The thin end of the wedge, already inserted, is the Utah Railroad, and to this is added the Utah Silver Mines. These, and their combined effects—the extension of commerce and the importation of the products of civilization—will, ere long, shiver to atoms and scatter to the winds the vast and baneful upas tree of polygamy.

At the present time, indeed, polygamy has begun to wither and decline, its growth being effectively checked by the expense necessarily attending the maintenance of more than one domestic establishment.

In the early days of Salt Lake City, money was so scarce among the Saints that they obtained what they wanted by barter. Seven water melons, report says, paid the price of a ticket for the theatre. The education of a Mormon's child was paid for by seventy-five cabbages a quarter. The dressmaker was sufficiently remunerated by four squashes per day. Two loads of pumpkins was the annual subscription for a newspaper; and a bottle of soothing syrup for the baby, could be obtained by a bushel of string beans.

CHAPTER III.

SALT LAKE CITY TO SAN FRANCISCO.

AVING shaken the dust of the Mormon city of refuge from off his feet, the Hermit set forth again for Ogden, on his way to the Pacific Slope.

At the Junction Depôt, where the Utah branch is connected with the main line of the Union and Central Pacific Railway, he dined, as well as he could, in the dining saloon; but the feeding arrangements at these restaurants are anything but satisfactory to weary hermits whose powers are not equal to the mastication or digestion of beef or mutton, when such food is tough and unsavory as leather. Moral—Always carry a supply of nutritious food with you in a conveniently portable form, for your delectation on the way,—a “Sustentation Fund” for the recuperation of wasted energies, and the proper maintenance of reserved physical forces, when crossing this continent.

The first of the two nights spent on this final stage of the journey was passed in comfortable sleep, and Elcho Depôt was the stoppage place for breakfast; the waiters at the restaurant being Chinese, the altitude being 5,050 feet, and the scenery imposingly grand. There were signs of commercial activity here. Strange and primitive as the houses and stores were in the small conglomeration or cluster of places of business; all being

of wood, and without any pretension to architectural merit, the general type might be called primeval. One in particular took the Hermit's fancy: this was a kind of shanty, the ground plan being a parallelogram, end on to the road; the elevation composed of boards, with two rooms on the ground floor, and two other rooms on the floor over them. One window was provided for each of these four rooms, two being in the front end, and the others in the side of the wooden box. The only evidence of any heating arrangements having been provided for, consisted of two wrought iron stove pipes, about five inches diameter, which were carried up through the roof, without any regard to uniformity of design, and not being perpendicular, they might be imagined to be in a state of semi-intoxication.

Outside this model structure there was painted the following information—

“ORLEANS RESTAURANT.”
“Rooms by the Day or Week.”

Nothing but sage brush and desert, existed all around this place; but the guide-book informs the outside world that good sport is to be had in the river and on the mountains within easy reach—game and fish being plentiful.

Going on westward, one finds the scene changing from plain and scrub, to rocks and sublime grandeur. Eureka, Palisade, Golconda, Winnemucca, and Raspberry Creek Depôts being passed, a dining station is reached, “Humbolt House,” which is, indeed, an oasis in a desert, with well-cared-for trees in a grassy inclosure. There is a pretty fountain playing in front of the house; and a boarded pathway leads up to the front door, from the

platform of the railway station. This is, undoubtedly, the best feeding-house on the road. Here on the edge of the great Nevada desert, the luxury of a newspaper was to be had for ten cents (fivepence English), half that sum being the price at places other than road-side railroad Depôts; the difference being the enterprising vendors' profit. The character of these papers generally, is infinitely below our English halfpenny provincial papers in quality, and quantity, and intellectual calibre.

Then follow Humbolt Lake, Hot Springs, and Reno, which latter is the station for the famous Comstock Mine, from which vast quantities of silver have been taken, amounting in round numbers to the value of 350 million dollars, or 70 millions sterling.

Early in the morning, after running down the western side of the richly wooded Sierra Nevada range, we reach Sacramento, where we breakfast at the Railway Depôt; a well designed, important, and imposing structure. We stop about half-an-hour, and so get a glimpse of the surroundings, which comprise many beautiful residences, partially concealed in luxurious, semi-tropical verdure. On resuming our journey, the panorama unfolded to view, is one of indescribable beauty. Lovely gardens and highly cultivated farms, evergreen groves, winding rivers, and beautiful bays alive with the sails of vessels engaged in the conveyance of the products of the soil. On one side the rugged Sierras, clad with perpetual living green, are crowned by snowy summits, glistening beneath a clear blue sky.

As the train proceeded onwards from this charming scenery towards San Francisco, the Hermit greatly

enjoyed the day-dream which it inspired, and could not help contrasting it with the foggy and smoky atmosphere of dear old London; the consolation, however, was great, in the reflection that after all there is only *one London* in the World, with its boundless wealth and power, glory and honour, and its time-honoured institutions; the growth of ages, the centre of the commercial world.

The next important place reached was Oakland; a favorite residential city for San Francisco men of business, and it may be taken for granted, that all "Frisco" men are men of business—all are working bees in their busy hive, the wealthy merchant, the enterprising tradesman, and the well-to-do mechanic. A charming place it is to retire to, after the business of the day is over. Beautifully situated on one side of a magnificent bay, it is a suburb of the greater city on the other side; the climate is simply lovely, and the communication between the two cities is half-hourly, by splendid steam ferry-boats of immense power and capacity. The inhabitants have the very rare privilege of being carried by railroad *free of charge* in the local trains of the Company, between the stations within the city limits; these trains run half-hourly the greater part of the day, over nearly five miles of road, and there are eight stations within the city limits. Well may this rural and picturesque city be the most popular suburb of San Francisco. Its population in 1870 was 11,000, and it is now 40,000.

From the end of the wharf, which is itself nearly three miles long, the distance to San-Francisco is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles across the wonderful bay, which is large enough

to float all the Navies of the World, and beautiful almost beyond imagination. Its surroundings are a combination of island, mountain, fortified promontories, city and plain, while the vast area of its waters is enlivened by numerous vessels engaged in carrying inwards and outwards the products of human industry, from clime to clime, for the markets of the civilised world.

The ferry boat lands its passengers at the foot of Market Street, at San Francisco, less than a mile distant from the hotels, where travellers find comfortable homes. Certainly these hotels are institutions deserving the gratitude of wayfarers requiring refreshing rest, after crossing the entire continent; the two principal being, the "Palace Hotel" and the "Baldwin." The Hermit put up at the last named, and found very comfortable apartments, comprising a sitting room, bed room, and bath room. The entire establishment is palatial and luxurious, combining in a remarkable degree real home comforts, with all that is elegant and refined, and at a cost which may truly be regarded as moderate. Three million dollars, it is said, were expended upon the building, its fittings and furniture, the whole being sumptuous, and the character grand.

And now here we are in that city which might justly be called the Queen of the West, "San Francisco." The sensations the Hermit now experienced can no more be imagined than described, as he was being conveyed through the roughly paved streets of this New World city, in a very Old World coach; the springs of the machine were adapted to the inequalities of the surface over which the wheels ran; the body of the curious conveyance, swinging first one way and then

another, with sudden lurches, which would rather astonish any traveller, accustomed only to the smooth surfaces of good roads and pavements, and the less cumbersome locomotive machinery of Europe.

But who can complain of these little discomforts, which indeed it would be base ingratitude to grumble about, after having realised the immense advantages of being enabled by the aid of the iron horse on the iron road, to traverse the entire Continent to see this corner of wonderland. These roads are lasting monuments of the amazing energy which far-seeing men brought to bear upon the herculean task, of traversing the mighty prairies, mountains, and plains, and thus opening up the Far West to the East, from the Pacific to the Atlantic. So far from grumbling at any rough places or small inconveniences, the Hermit felt that, all honour is due to those courageous Californian Pioneers who took the mighty task in hand, and by dint of indomitable pluck carried it through.

As soon as he had made his little arrangements in the domestic line, the Hermit strolled forth into the streets of this fresh creation of houses and palaces, provided for a population which now numbers 300,000. The first house was built no further back than 1835, the place being then called "Yuba Buena," changed to San Francisco in 1847, before the discovery of gold in California.

One pleasing feature observable to a stranger is the regard paid by the inhabitants to the education of the rising generation, the city being amply supplied with schools; and in this matter they take great pride. The same may be said of American citizens in all the States; it would, indeed, be invidious to single out one State as being better than another in this respect.

As regards religion, all kinds of denominations are provided for. Churches abound ; the Jewish synagogue being the finest of all. Even the Chinese having their "Joss houses."

The city is provided with sixty-five newspapers and periodicals, thirteen are daily papers, some of these being high class. All interests and parties are well provided for in news and literature. The Californians are a reading people and well informed on all general subjects which go towards making a history.

Libraries are numerous, well appointed and provided, and several of the best are open free, to tourists upon application.

The shops, especially those of the jewellers, will compare favourably with those of any modern city, whether of America or Europe; the art of the goldsmith being carried to such a degree of perfection as to leave little to fear from external rivalry ; this at least was the impression made upon the Hermit's mind as he strolled down Montgomery Street. An exploration of San Francisco cannot be considered complete without a visit to "Cliff House," an hotel which is built upon a rock and overlooks the Pacific Ocean. The "Drive" to this house, reminds one of that through the Central Park of New York; taste, and skill, and labour, sustained by liberal supplies of the circulating medium, have combined to create and establish this vast pleasure ground, over a series of sand-hills. Choice trees, and shrubs, and semi-tropical plants, occupy what was once barren soil ; and thus have science and industry come to the aid of nature, and created a veritable Eden, minus the "tree of knowledge."

One other visit must be paid, and that is to a quarter of the city known as China-town; not exactly for pleasure, but to see "John Chinaman" at home. So the Hermit, accompanied by two gentlemen whose acquaintance he had made, proceeded to the principal police office, to ask for the favour of the services of a detective officer, as a guide, philosopher, friend, and protector, for the inspection of this district,—and this help was politely accorded.

The three then trudged leisurely along, and soon found themselves among a multitude of small shops, occupied by dealers in all kinds of commodities, many of these being quite indescribable by any European terms. Cigars may be seen in process of manufacture in cellars. In the shops some work at sewing machines, some artists shave the heads of their customers, and others mend shoes, while the owner waits till the work is done. Then we come to eating-houses; and see exposed for sale, smoked ducks, pigs' heads, livers and gizzards of fowls, chickens cooked in oil, sodden pork, sausages, &c.

Gambling hells, opium smoking dens, and eating houses were visited, and the inner life of Chinese society peeped into, our guide being politely received everywhere. In one of the refreshment houses, provision was evidently made for the wants of celestials of a higher grade than common, the furniture and appointments indicating rather luxurious tastes and habits. The tables and chairs were such as would delight the hearts of English æsthetics; no "sunflowers," but real Chinese manufacture, as China-like, and uncomfortable as oriental ingenuity could possibly devise. Little cases and odd corners were full of nick-nacks, and one or two dens

were provided for opium smokers, each fitted for two smokers, who sit on the carpeted floor, and have the requisite paraphernalia placed between them, and thus they smoke their inner selves away into imaginary bliss, to wake up after a time, and find that after all they are still in California.



CHAPTER IV.

FARMING PROSPECTS IN THE "FAR WEST."

 FEW days of quiet life in San Francisco having somewhat restored the Hermit's nervous energy, he next set out to visit the famous Yosemite Valley, an undertaking which requires a whole week for its performance. The first thing to do towards its accomplishment is, to determine on the route, for there are three, and then to secure a seat or seats on the coach, which will convey you across the plains and over the mountains, from the end of the first section of the journey which is performed by rail; the entire distance from San Frisco to the valley, including the "Big Tree" district, being about 200 miles.

The Hermit and a genial friend, whose acquaintance he made on the Central Pacific Railroad—Mr. Horace Manuel, Banker, of New York—chose the Madera route, and secured the box seats of the coach for the journey; the party consisted of seven tourists, and the start from San Francisco was made on a Monday forenoon. The travellers met on the wharf at the bottom of Market Street, crossed the bay to Oakland on board one of the passenger steamers, and then took the train for Madera.

The train being one which stopped at all the stations, or depôts, as they are called on the road, afforded the

Hermit opportunities for observation, on other matters of interest besides the picturesque ; and coupling what he saw with the information he had obtained, bearing on the now vital question of the day in England, namely, the agricultural interest, and all the issues involved in its prosperity or adversity, he arrived at a conclusion from which he fain would have escaped if he could. That conclusion is, that it will be useless for the British farmer, to grow wheat in competition with the farmers in the Western States of America.

It may possibly be that the reforming statesmen now in office, with a powerful majority at their backs, may so deal with the incidence of taxation, as to shift some burdens in that way, from one set of shoulders to another set ; but such measures will merely amount to a palliation, and it may be taken as an axiom, that no reduction of financial burdens, will enable any man, in any walk of commercial life, to pay something out of nothing.

Growing wheat at a cost which exceeds its market value will place the farmer in this position, or worse ; because he will have as an inevitable result, less than nothing—a loss. How many farmers have been ruined in the attempt in the last few years cannot be told, but unquestionably very many ; and one serious result is notorious, that tenants cannot be found for a great number of farms, which formerly afforded a living for their occupiers.

If it be asked how this deplorable state of things has come about, we are told that it is due to the bad seasons of the last six years. No doubt short crops and bad harvests have had much to do with the heavy losses and widespread ruin ; but, in the olden time before the

days of free trade, deficiencies occasioned by unfavourable seasons, would have been made good to the farmer by an enhanced price ; now, there is no such chance of his shifting the loss by, so to speak, taking the bread eaters of the country into partnership with him in bad seasons, and leaving him in the full enjoyment of the good ones, which is just what the old arrangement meant.

Free trade has deprived the farmer of this advantage, which can never be restored to him, for the statesman is not living who would dare to propose to tax the food of the people for the benefit of a class, *i.e.*, the occupiers and owners of land.

The industrial classes of this country, have quite enough to do to hold their own in these days, to compete successfully with those of other countries where the action of the stupid blindfold doctrine of "protection to native industry," is such as to exclude them, in whole or in part, from some of the markets of the world.

No doubt the time will come, when the short-sighted politicians in distant climes, will learn that the best and permanent interests of any country, cannot be promoted by laws opposed to the sound principles of true political economy. Laws which, for the sake of making a few rich at the expense of the many, foster an artificial state of activity among manufacturers, by making their productions needlessly expensive to the consumer.

But in the meantime the world goes round, and the battle goes on. The British manufacturer may be trusted to hold his own in the long run against such quackery, and may safely be backed in the race with those, who, in other countries, are coddled in the nurseries of protection; relying on unnatural aid to enable them to secure trade

profits, which the self-reliant Englishman will obtain without such assistance.

The English farmer, however, does not possess the manufacturers' resources; but is so handicapped in the race, as materially to reduce the chances he formerly had, of cultivating his land so as to obtain remunerative results. Free trade in corn, did not after the first few years materially interfere with his success, on the contrary, his prosperity seemed to increase from one cause or another; and this was plainly indicated, by active competition among farmers for farms, so that it became common for a landlord to have the choice of selection, when would-be tenants applied for a vacant holding, and very often at an increased rent.

Unfortunately, of late all this has been changed, many farms are unoccupied, and some are even uncultivated; landlords are seeking tenants, too often in vain—and those are fortunate who can let their land at a reduced rental, cases having been heard of, in which farms have been let rent free for a term, so as to prevent their going out of cultivation.

The causes are not far to seek. First and foremost among these, is the rapid development of agriculture in the United States. In the Western States, excellent land, adapted for the growth of wheat or any grain, may be bought at such a price that in many cases the first or second year's crop will pay the purchase-money.

This land will not require the stimulating aid of high-farming, nor assistance in the way of fertilising agents, for several years, to produce crops of from 40 to 60 bushels of wheat per acre. The Hermit was informed, on good authority, of a farm on which for three years in

succession, a crop of wheat had been grown from only one seed-sowing, the waste in harvesting the first crop, leaving sufficient seed on the surface to produce the second, and again, the second harvesting left enough on the ground to produce the third, the yield of the first crop being 60, the second 50, and the third 40 bushels per acre.

The amazing increase of the acreage under cultivation, has been largely due to the enterprise of the Americans in opening up the country by railroads, and by these, facilities for getting the produce to market, have been augmented to such a degree as to largely reduce the almost prohibitory cost of transit to ports of shipment; and while these altered circumstances have been in course of development, the cost of freights by sea has been greatly reduced, by the employment of larger vessels, propelled by improved steam machinery.

Thus it has come about, that distance has been nearly annihilated; and year by year these agencies, which are all in favour of the Far West, will be found to tell more and more against the interests of the wheat grower in England.

The Americans, sorely pressed by the heavy cost of manual labour, have long been remarkable for their skill and ingenuity in adapting machinery to the requirements of agriculture; and among their earliest achievements, some years since, was the reaping machine, which in the United States and in this country, has, by various devices of both American and English origin, been brought to great perfection, and rendered invaluable aid in harvest work.

But this meritorious invention has been eclipsed

recently through American genius, by a "harvester," which effects much greater economy; by clipping the ears only from standing corn, and inclining them towards a mechanical guide, which diverts them into a small thrasher, in which the chaff is separated from the grain, the kernels being delivered into bags which only require to be removed when full, and sewn up there and then; and the crop is ready for delivery at the railway dépôt, or at a shipping wharf, as the case may be. The machinery by which this work is effected, is operated by twenty mules and five men, and is capable of harvesting about 35 acres per day; the economy effected is said to be very considerable. The straw left standing, not being of any value in California, is afterwards burned, and the ashes ploughed in.

What, then, is the British farmer to do, who has no other resource at home but to cultivate land on the old system of rotation of crops, and is in so many ways placed at a disadvantage as regards soil, climate, and facilities, which are not available in his native land. This question, all men must answer for themselves; but common sense suggests that those who are not too far advanced in life, and whose means have not been dissipated entirely, should transplant themselves and their belongings, to the regions where competence, as the result of industry wisely directed, is within easy reach.

It, however, is not by any means to be understood, that the Hermit is of opinion that profitable farming is coming to an end in the Old Country, and that land is to be valueless. He is impressed with the conviction, that much may be done to remove the causes of that depression which has so long been felt in agriculture,

although he has ceased to believe in the profitable production of home-grown wheat. But, not being a farmer, it would ill become him to presume to teach farmers their business.

He would like, however, to know the reason why, seeing that butter is, and has been for years past, worth in the market quite twice as much as it was when he was a young man living in an agricultural district, that we have failed to meet the demand for it, and left foreigners to supply us with either the pure article, or "Butterine," or "Oleomargerine," to the tune of more than twelve millions sterling per annum, which shows an increase of over eleven millions of money sent out of the country in 1880, more than in 1840, for this one article of domestic consumption, which might just as well be produced at home.

Take cheese, again, as another example of the want of enterprise in England, for which a sum of nearly five millions sterling was sent out of the country in 1880, in excess of the value of the cheese imported in 1840; and for eggs, something over two millions sterling was the excess paid in the one year over the other, and no one need be told that now, a new laid egg is an expensive luxury which indeed money will not always command, owing to scarcity. Comment on these facts ought to be superfluous; probably, excuses for non-production or non-attention to these trifles in farming administration, may be more plentiful than eggs, but it is difficult for an amateur to believe, that it is not a good business to cultivate the production of food in this nourishing form, at present prices, which have prevailed for some years; nothing is more common than to hear that home laid

eggs sell readily in our towns at $2d.$, $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ and even $3d.$ each; five for a shilling, is indeed a common price instead of a shilling for twenty eggs, which was the price, some thirty years ago. Formerly in Ireland it was the pig, that paid the rent; and in Lancashire it is the rule now, that the fowls pay the farmers' rent; and surely, if it pays, as it certainly does, in Lancashire, where all the corn which the fowls require has to be bought, because little or none is grown there, it would be a source of profit in other counties.



CHAPTER V.

SAN FRANCISCO TO THE YOSEMITE.

NOW let us resume our journey after this digression, which was indeed suggested by the spectacle of vast quantities of wheat which the Hermit saw, piled up in bags containing in the aggregate millions of bushels; some of these piles of bags of wheat being on the ground by the road side near the railway depôts, others by the side of water highways and harbours, conveniently near places where vessels could be moored to receive cargoes for transport; and again in monster warehouses, wooden structures built on piles and extending some considerable distance into the river or bay, so that vessels of deep draught may lie alongside to be laden.

The journey to Madera need not be described; suffice it to say that after stopping at "Lathrop" Depôt to dine, we arrived at the end of our railway trip at night, when we enjoyed our night's rest in bed. Our car had been shunted on to a siding, without our being disturbed or knowing anything about the operation; and in the morning, our obliging attendant made us acquainted with the fact, that it was five o'clock; we then rose, performed our ablutions and walked across to the hotel.

There we heard the melancholy news of the death of President Garfield. A telegram conveying the intelli-

gence had been received the night before. This sad ending of his protracted sufferings had been expected daily for several days, but when the announcement came it affected the feelings of Englishmen and Americans alike; all who heard the news mourned the loss.

The inhabitants of the civilised world, in every corner of it, felt that the very valuable life of a great and good man had been cut short, by the dastardly act of a vile wretch; that a demon in human form had crushed the bright hopes of a great nation, and sent a pang through every breast in which patriotic feelings had a home.

All present felt subdued, while a quiet meal was taken; and after this, the party of seven, bound for the Yosemite, stowed away their limited quantity of baggage in the coach, and having adjusted themselves in their seats, started in good style, with four excellent horses, driven by a good whip; after the word had been given in the usual American style—"All aboard."

The first part of this journey was not particularly interesting, the road—or, rather, the way—being across dusty plains, and then over-rising ground,—hilly, scrubby, and rocky; thousands of ground squirrels darting about, mountain quail, and grouse were often seen, and now and then prairie birds rose on the wing, within shot. Pleasant travelling, had it not been for the dust which rose from our horses' feet and the coach wheels in a constant cloud; but we did not allow this to trouble us,—all were too good-natured to make a trouble of any disagreeable circumstance, the object which all aimed at, being, to add to one another's enjoyment, and in this we succeeded admirably.

And certainly our good nature was rewarded, for as we sped on our way the landscape became more varied and captivating, and the pleasures of the road increased. Puns, jokes, yarns, and travellers' stories, were not wanting, and in this way John Bull got on very well with Cousin Jonathan, so that in a few hours the little party came to be a kind of mutual admiration society.

At about noon, or a little after, we pulled up in front of a wood-framed house, which had been established for the convenience of travellers, as a feeding place, and here we had a double object to attain, namely, a wash and a mid-day meal. We alighted on a platform in front of the house, and before going in, shook as much dust as we could from off our overcoats of brown holland, which in America are called "dusters;" we then went through a central passage into the back yard, and helped ourselves to buckets of water out of a tub, by the liberal use of which we improved our personal appearance, and increased our comfort before sitting down at the dinner table, where we refreshed the inner man, and then started again on our way.

The final stage of that day's journey ended at "Clarke's Ranch," as it is called, the house being a commodious hotel, situated in a valley with romantic surroundings. The way to it is over the Sierra Nevadas; the wagon road is cut on the sides of the mountains, out of the solid rock, and is about as romantic a road as can well be imagined. Winding about so as to make the gradients as favourable as may be practicable, the width of the wagon road is only sufficient for the passage of one vehicle at a time, except here and there, where one may pass another; always rising ground

on one side, that ground towering upwards being rock, and, on the other, a ravine of varying depth, but generally frightful to look down upon, considering that the coach wheels on that side, were generally within about two feet of the edge, and that such an accident as the fracture of an axle, the giving way of a wheel, or the shying of a horse, would probably be sufficient to cause the destruction of coach and passengers, by the whole concern, horses included, being toppled over down a declivity of some thousand or more feet.

Nervous people should not take this journey, but the grandeur of the ride is something never to be forgotten; not only is the road very narrow, and the outer edge unprotected, but the curves are not only frequent, but so sharp, that sometimes the passengers sitting on the box seat, cannot see the heads of the leaders of the team, which sometimes consists of four, and sometimes of six horses.

These curves, commonly passed round at a good swinging trot, are calculated to a nicety by the drivers, and these men, and the horses too, thoroughly understand their work. As for the passengers, well, unless their nerves are pretty strong, they now and then can hardly help feeling a sensation of fear, lest the machine and everybody in it may be overturned into the deep valley, and the sides of the ravine are so precipitous as to afford no chance of a lodgment, such as could arrest the downward progress to inevitable destruction.

But putting all such ideas on one side, the Hermit was charmed with the ever-changing views presented to the gaze of the traveller on these pine-clad mountains, on which the laws of Nature have not been regulated by

the hand of man. He had made himself familiar with mountain scenery in several countries, but had never seen such heights so beautifully clad with living green, nor such slopes covered with noble pines, and these are the prevailing type of the trees in these forests.

It was eight o'clock in the evening when we reached "Clarke's Ranch," and it had been dark for the last hour or two, obliging us to light our lamps. Had it not been for the great confidence we felt in our coachman who knew every inch of the road, as he told us, from constantly driving over it, this latter portion of the journey would have inspired us with very disquieting fears, but as it was, we simply considered it to be a bit of experience which we should ever remember.

One sight we had during that ride in the dark, which afforded us gratification; it was a very tall tree on fire, in the midst of the forest and very near our track; as we went along we could see the fire rising near the topmost branches, some 200 feet high, licking its way from branch to branch upwards; the sight was awful in the blackness of the surroundings, and excited reflection on the evidences we had seen, and afterwards saw, of the abominable and wasteful habit or custom which has long prevailed, of making fires by kindling brushwood at the base of a tree.

It seems that when a small party in the pursuit of game, or anything in the forest, require a fire, they simply pile up a few sticks against the trunk of any monarch of the woods and set a light to them; and thus kindle a fire which not unfrequently destroys the tree; just about as economical a trick as that attributed to the Chinese, of setting fire to a house when they desire roast

pork, that a pig may be roasted inside it ; rather worse indeed, because another house may soon be built and fuel so provided, for more roast pork. Not so, however, with those grand trees, which cannot be replaced within the lapse of ages. These charred trunks of living trees may be counted by the thousand ; and thousands of others have been entirely destroyed, and stand or lie about, being nothing more than black stalks or logs, encumbering the ground. "Waste not, want not," is a motto not regarded in the forests of California.

Peace and plenty prevailed in the plain and simple, clean and wholesome house of entertainment at Clarke's Ranch that evening, where the order of the day always is in accord with the first part of the proverb, *i.e.*, "early to bed, early to rise ;" but the Hermit's short acquaintance with the place did not enable him to determine whether the latter part of this saw, is strictly applicable in the meridian of Mariposa. However, there is no getting on in the world without a dinner, so, as usual, we dined ; and the Hermit having, after dinner, smoked the metaphorical pipe of peace, with an Indian, who was sitting in an adjoining room by the side of a wood fire, which was burning on a brick hearth, and exchanged friendly words and grunts, with this specimen of humanity, retired for the night.

The following morning broke bright and fair, and afforded an opportunity of a pleasant stroll about the premises and in the precincts of a saw-mill just outside. The Hermit having thoroughly enjoyed a delightful ramble in the fresh morning air, returned to breakfast off mountain quail on toast, followed by a couple of boiled eggs, and finishing off with a few grapes. A well-

provided table is a pleasant prospect in any wilderness, and not less in California than in any other region.

Shortly after breakfast, the coach comes to the door, and after all adjustments have been made, and the usual inquiry of "All aboard?" having been called out, off we go for the valley, twenty-five miles distant, the distance performed on the previous day being about sixty-five miles.



CHAPTER VI.

THE YOSEMITE, AND THE "BIG TREES."

HE journey from Clarke's Ranch, although the distance is only twenty-five miles, occupies about five hours, notwithstanding that the coach is well horsed; for the road is mountainous and rough, therefore the average rate of progress is slow; but it cannot be considered tedious. Everything is entirely novel, and much that one sees is interesting; sometimes it is a case of creeping along up a winding bit of road, upon a mountain side in the midst of a dense forest, at other times a view opens up which baffles description; the vast extent, and the sublimity of its grandeur, being too much for words to pourtray.

Ever and anon you are whirled round the sharp curves in the track, which the engineers who constructed the road seem to have contrived for the fun of the thing. Well, by-and-by we reach a rocky eminence called "Inspiration Point," and from this vantage ground we get a glorious view of the famous valley we have travelled so far to see.

Here we descend from our coach and take a limited stroll to look down upon the gorgeous scenery from several points, and feast our senses while we thus gaze on, apparently, some astonishing freaks of nature, by which granite rocks, now standing with bare and vertical

sides, some 4,000 feet high, have been rent asunder by inconceivable force. These vertical walls of cream coloured granite, in some parts facing each other at a distance of less than half-a-mile apart, are of all conceivable varieties of outline and contour.

After having obtained this view, we remounted our coach, and very soon afterwards commenced the continuous and rapid descent to the bottom of the valley. We next stop at the first house in the valley,—“Leidig’s Hotel;” this is a wooden structure, of a simple and perfectly unpretentious character, such as a village carpenter might be supposed to have erected without the aid of an architect; wood, wood, wood, verily all is wood in the valley, except the rocks which are granite; and, as to Leidig’s Hotel, it is all wood, excepting the locks or latches and hinges on the doors, the glass in the windows and the grates in the fire-places. But everything is clean and wholesome, and every possible attention is paid to his guests by the proprietor, who is very obliging, looks after the business attentively, and does the waiting at table; his wife is the cook of the establishment, and a very good plain cook she is.

Here we took up our abode; and for two clear days the Hermit led a very secluded life, leaving his friends to do the mountaineering, on foot or on horseback, for a few hours in the day, while he wandered about in the solitude and silence of the woods in the valley, and by the side of the River Merced, which runs through it at the foot of the grand old rocks. Among these intensely interesting memorials of long by-gone ages, he ruminated, varying the current of his thoughts by occasionally devoting an hour or two, to the agreeable occupation

of writing to his far-off friends, who, although absent in the body, were present in the spirit, as he was with them.

In quite another way the immense granite rocks of the Yosemite, remind one of the effect produced upon the senses when looking at, and endeavouring to realise, just conceptions of the vastness of Niagara. In regard to that stupendous scenery and to this, the precise impressions produced are such as cannot be defined.

Such overwhelmingly grand manifestations of Almighty power, are calculated to overawe and subdue the mind of man, and produce a wholesome sense of feebleness and littleness.

Doctor Bunnell, in his interesting "History of the Yosemite," quotes the following from Richardson's charming book entitled, "Beyond the Mississippi":—

"See Yosemite, and die! I shall not attempt to describe it; the subject is too large, and my capacity is too small. * * * Painfully at first, these stupendous walls confuse the mind. By degrees, day after day, the sight of them clears it, until at last one receives a just impression of their solemn immensity. * * * Volumes ought to be, and will be written about it."

Again, that entertaining writer on California, Charles Nordhoff, says, in his "Book for Travellers and Settlers":—

"I read before I made the journey, Hutchings's book, Professor Whitney's book, and all the accounts of the valley I could lay my hands on, including White's in the Chicago Tribune, one of the best. Yet, when I came to see the valley, it was as though I had never read a line concerning it. All I had read



EL CAPITAN (3,300 feet in height)

passed out of my mind in the presence of those stupendous rocks; all I had seen, was as nothing, compared with the grand, white, scarred granite face of El Capitan, which rears its precipitous side 3,300 feet above the level along which you ride."

And this is only one of seventeen of the mountains of rock in the valley, a list of which he gives, the highest, called Cloud's Rest, being 6,034 feet above the level of the road at its foot.

On the opposite page is a view of El Capitan, reproduced from a photograph by Watkins, of Montgomery Street, San Francisco.

The Indian name of this Captain of the Valley is "Iote-ack-a-mu-la," the signification being, Rock Chief or Captain, the American name being, El Capitan, which is the Spanish interpretation of the Indian name.

On the morning of the third day, after having entered this marvellous valley, we started at about eight o'clock to return to Clarke's Ranch, by the way we had come, and having wound our way up the tortuous ascent on to the high ground outside the valley, we stopped at "Inspiration Point" to have one more look on the scene beneath us—a parting glance—and then we retraced the road to Clarke's, whose now familiar house of wood, with its verandahs, we reached at about noon, and after the indispensable "wash and brush-up" we dined. Having thus made ourselves tolerably comfortable, we again took the road on our trusty coach, with four good and fresh horses, for a drive of a few miles to visit the Mariposa grove of "Big Trees."

The road to these mighty denizens of the "Grove," as it is called, is through forest haunts of Nature, all the

way, and trees of great diameter and height are numerous. It is astonishing and grievous to see, the extent of mischief done among them by fire at their base, extending as it does, in many instances, a considerable height up their magnificent trunks.

Having arrived at the grove of what are emphatically called "big trees," we are amazed at the vast proportions of these living memorials of bye-gone centuries; 1,255 years of the growth of one of these patriarchs of the forest, have been actually ascertained, by counting the number of the concentric rings, which denote the annual growth of all trees; this, however, was not the full measure of the age of this one, because there was a small cavity in the centre, which prevented the completion of the sum, and this deficiency of actual data, has been estimated at about 50 years, so that in round numbers its age may be put at 1,300 years.

To ascertain this interesting fact, the tree was cut down, by boring through it with pump augers, and then by driving in wedges on one side, causing the giant to incline to the opposite side till it fell over.

The work of boring occupied five men twenty-two days, and the operation of causing it to fall, by driving in wedges, was effected by three days' labour. The details of the crime of murdering this monster, may be found in Professor Whitney's "Description of the Yosemite Valley and the Adjacent Region of the Sierra Nevada," &c.

One of these prodigious specimens, being hollow for some distance upward, has had an opening cut in two opposite sides, of ample width and height for a coach and six horses to be driven through it, and the interior

is large enough for a long-bodied coach and pair of horses to stand within it.

A view of this, reproduced from a photograph by Watkins, is given as a frontispiece to this account of the Hermit's wanderings. The generic name of these trees is *Sequoia Gigantea*, and there are eight distinct patches or groves of them. The eight groves are, in geographical order, from north to south: first, the Calaveras; second, the Stanislaus; third, Crane Flat and Merced; fourth, Mariposa; fifth, Fresno; sixth, King's and Kaweah Rivers; seventh, North Fork, Yule River; eighth, South Fork, Nile River.

There are in the Calaveras Grove between 90 and 100 trees of large size, and a considerable number of small ones on the outskirts. One has had the bark stripped from it to the height of 116 feet above the ground. The bark thus removed, after being exhibited in different places, was set up in the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, and unfortunately destroyed there by a fire.

The tallest tree now standing in this grove is the one called "Keystone State," and this has been ascertained by actual measurement to be 325 feet in height.

Professor Whitney says "this is the tallest tree yet measured on this continent"; therefore the boast of the cute Yankee, who declared there are in America, some trees so tall that it "takes two men and a boy to see the top of them," has not yet been proved to be correct.

CHAPTER VII.

TO SAN FRANCISCO AGAIN.

HE Hermit having seen the wonderful valley, and the Big Trees, and secured some seed from them in their cones ; also some acorns from the Californian evergreen oaks, which grow and abound in the valleys, to take home for propagation in the old country, so that long-lived mementos of his visit may testify, to his wanderings in the Far West, returned to Clarke's ; and here he enjoyed an evening meal, a cigarette with an Indian, and a good night's rest.

Early the next morning we turned out of our dormitories, and after an early breakfast, and having resumed our seats on the coach, set forth on our way towards the bright and gay city of San Francisco.

"Hail smiling morn, that tips the hills with gold," might well have been sung in chorus, on that lovely morning, as we sped along the track over the glorious pine-clad mountains. We had now before us a stage coach journey of sixty-five miles, and having gone over the ground once before, we knew pretty well what to look for, as regards the character of the road, with its thick coating of dust, and its rough places ; which frequently caused our being jumped or bumped off our seats, thereby combining the advantages of travelling on wheels with the exercise derivable from riding on horseback.

Glad indeed we were, when we reached the end of that day's journey, and found ourselves safely landed once more at the little Hotel at Madera; from which, after dinner in the evening, we walked across to our sleeping car, which we found on the railroad siding, ready to receive us. What time the train started the Hermit cannot say, for he very soon retired to his berth and went to sleep without any persuasion.

Early the next morning, at about the dawn of day indeed, he awoke refreshed, and indulged in observations of the agricultural country he was passing through, by frequently peeping out of his window as he lay in bed, the land being nearly level, with mountains in the distant background; and thus he was occupied till he rose from his couch and prepared for breakfast, which was found ready, on the arrival of the train at Lathrop.

At the restaurant here they keep a fine grizzly bear in a cage, by the side of a platform on which all the passengers walk to and from the refreshment room. This is an interesting specimen of the kind of big game which sportsmen, who were pioneers of the country about the valley, had to deal with. In a few years, these rough customers were so reduced by death and by banishment, that they became scarce.

At about noon we again reached San Francisco, and found the inhabitants devoted to an extraordinary demonstration in honour of the late President James Garfield. A funereal procession had been arranged and organised on a vast scale, and was to pass through the principal streets of the city; passing through Market Street at the time we arrived there, which was near one o'clock, it had then been passing for some two hours,

and continued to pass for nearly two hours afterwards; the number of people forming it, was stated to be about seventy thousand.

Vehicular traffic was suspended for the time, and we had to wait until it was resumed before we could get to our hotel. This display of loyal fervour may be taken, as the measure of the strong hold, which the murdered President had upon the best feelings of the people. Few men, raised to the topmost pinnacle of honour by the voice of any nation, have ever been known to take such a firm hold of the affections of any people as President Garfield had, of those of the United States of America.

The Hermit having at last reached his hotel, afterwards took a stroll about the City till dinner time; and after dinner went to see a representation of "Old Kentucky" at the Baldwin Theatre, which amused and interested him for an hour, before he retired to his rooms for the night.

The next day was the last which he allowed himself the pleasure of spending in this very charming city; and having done a little shopping, securing little mementos and a supply of photographs, so that on his return to his native country, his friends might see in this pictured form, some of the scenery he had beheld; he next tested a tramway, the cars on which are drawn by an invisible mechanical power underground, namely, a wire rope which is kept in constant action by a fixed steam engine, established in some out of the way place, and after two trial rides in one of these cars, he became enamoured with it, and formed an opinion decidedly favorable to its adoption in London. The traction is smooth and pleasant, and as regards comfort, greatly in

advance of anything known in Europe. It is now about being introduced at Chicago, and if perchance it finds its way to London it would be regarded as a boon. Always bearing in mind that tramways *per se* are a nuisance everywhere, to those who have to drive across their rails, and that in the streets of a city they are an abominable nuisance.

One of the last arrangements the Hermit had to make, was, for his return from the West to the East, and, having consulted the railway authorities, he found it practicable to adopt a route which would include Southern California, Los Angeles, Arizona, New Mexico, and a corner of Colorado. This, therefore, he decided on; forthwith took a through ticket round that southerly side of the country to New York, returned to the "Baldwin" to dinner; spent a pleasant evening, next morning bade good-bye to the charming city, and set out on his return to the East, delighted with his comfortable temporary home, at the "Baldwin."



CHAPTER VIII.

TO LOS ANGELES.



HE way from San Francisco to Los Angeles is over the same ground as that to the Yosemite, so far as the first ninety miles is concerned, which ends at Madera. We left at 9.30 one morning, dined at Lathrop and supped at Madera; after which we retired to our beds as we pleased, and at 8 o'clock the next morning arrived at Los Angeles.

The Hermit put up at the "Pico House," and after a refreshing wash and breakfast, set himself the task of exploring the district; and collecting, from trusty sources, information concerning the products of the soil; upon which all else here depends.

With this object he applied to one of the proprietors of the hotel, who readily responded to his appeal with information, and directed him to two establishments well worthy of a visit; and to one of these two gave him a letter of introduction. A well-appointed buggy, and pair of well bred small horses, was ordered round to the front door, and in a very little time the Hermit was being driven into the country, in a style which would not be at all discreditable in Hyde Park.

Thus prepared for the day's work, the Hermit started with an intelligent driver by his side, who gave him much useful information concerning the nature of the

soil, its value in the market, the cost of working it—irrigation, the method of leading water from the foot hills, respecting the artesian wells of the district, the value of the produce, and a great variety of things in general.

Evidences of the great fertility of the land, were plentiful enough, consisting of hundreds of acres of grapes, orange and lemon groves, pomegranates, pears, apples and peaches, all in thriving condition. Peace and plenty reigned supreme; and at the first stopping place, which was about ten or twelve miles from Los Angeles, the Hermit found a very satisfactory example, typical of the enterprising spirit which animates the American mind. This place is called "Sierra Madre Villa;" and the information concerning it, which he obtained from the proprietor, may be summarised in the following story, or relation of facts:—

The estate consists of between 500 and 600 acres of land; which had been purchased, about six years before the Hermit's visit, by a prosperous man of business living in New York, then and still, the proprietor of two drug stores in that city.

This gentleman conceived the idea, of investing some capital in the purchase of land in the Western States; and in the course of his journeyings, he found and purchased this small tract, which is situated near the base of some foot hills, and slopes down, several hundred feet towards the Pacific Ocean, thirty miles distant; and so clear is the atmosphere that the sea is, at that distance, visible to the naked eye.

At the time he made the purchase there was not a tree on the land; all was arid and barren, nothing but

useless scrub existing upon it. At the time of the Hermit's visit there were twenty acres of fruit trees, and twenty-five acres of grape vines, all flourishing.

The trees consisted of an orange grove, flanked on each side by lemons, limes, and pomegranates ; and outside these were pears, and peach orchards, all fruitful, the oranges being surprisingly so, and the then green fruit hanging on the trees had to be propped up to prevent the branches from breaking ; and as regard the grape vines, wagons were then employed daily in carrying the fruit to a neighbouring distillery, to be converted into wine.

About 500 acres were devoted to the growth of corn of several kinds, and other ordinary farming produce, and these acres were very soon cleared and sown ; and in a few months afforded support for all the horses and cattle, required to do the work of the entire farm.

Such is the fertility of the soil that a quarter of an acre of beet, re-planted as the roots are used, will support two cows during the whole year. The Chilian clover, or Alfalfa, as it is called, which is very good food for pigs, cows, and plough-horses, will, when irrigated, yield enormous crops, as much as fifteen tons per acre, eight cuttings being commonly taken in a year.

The successful proprietor of this farm, having far-seeing instincts, conceived the notion of adding materially to the value of his investment, by building an Hotel in close proximity to the residence he had built for himself ; he carried out his idea by erecting a wood frame building, which is a delightful residence for people desiring a pleasant health resort. This house is always full of guests all the year round, and seventy or eighty horses

are commonly required daily for them, either for the saddle or the carriage.

These guests, and the horses which they require, are all maintained, and their material wants provided for, by the produce of the farm. Beef, mutton, veal, pork, fowls, milk, butter, eggs, and fruit, all are produced in abundance on this farm, which, six years before was barren land.

The secret of this successful farming, so far as everything is concerned except corn, may be defined in one word—Irrigation. The springs in the foot hills in the background, were conveyed by a small aqueduct to a reservoir, so as to obtain the pressure of a head of water for the supply of the house and hotel; and thence, by arterial pipes, commanded by valves, the water was delivered wherever it might be wanted.

It so happened that at the time the Hermit was engaged in conversation with Mr. Cogswell, the proprietor, in front of his chateau, two Chinese labourers, who attend to the irrigation business, commenced operations for giving the grove of orange trees a soaking. The *modus operandi* was, to lay a V trough or troughs of wood, from a stand pipe near the first tree in the grove, to conduct the water to it; the soil around each tree, all the way down the grove, having been raised by rough hoeing so as to form a basin, some three yards in diameter and about nine inches deep, there being a space of some two or three yards between each of these basins. It was one man's work to connect them all, one by one, with these troughs, while the other man adjusted and superintended the flow of water, from tree to tree, down the entire grove, the ground falling all

the way to the further end which may be a mile or so distant from the top; and thus all the basins were filled by gravitation.

This irrigating operation is required only about eight times in the year, and is done at a trifling cost. The inspection by the Hermit induced a question, as to the economy of Chinese labour. This has been and is, a vexed question in America, and the reply was, that, "but for it, California would not have risen to its present state of prosperity so soon by at least ten years." This, the Hermit was assured, was not on account of its cheapness, but because of the reliable character of "John Chinaman" as a labourer; he is paid at about the same rate as the white man, but he sticks to his work, and does it all the week through, whereas the white labourer too commonly, under the influence of whiskey, shirks his work, and frequently absents himself from his employment, as long as may suit his convenience; quite regardless of his employer's interest.

Finally, the Hermit ascertained, that the entire cost of this establishment, which includes the purchase of the land, the clearing of its wild scrub, sowing the farm seeds for corn, grasses and root crops; the purchase, planting and cultivation of the trees and vines, until they bore fruit, had been recouped within the first three years. And such is the owner's estimate of its value, that he told the Hermit he would not sell it for ten nor for fifteen times its cost.

After this inspection and a lunch at this lovely health resort, with its semi-tropical garden, and its captivating surroundings, the Hermit drove two or three miles further on to the vineyard and distillery of Mr. Rose.

The land all about the distillery is nearly covered with grape vines and fruit trees, and the distillery is a model concern. The only measure of its capacity which the Hermit took note of, was, the capital employed in such vessels of wood as casks, vats, and tuns, and this was 63,000 dollars. The only difficulty experienced in the conduct of the undertaking, is, to produce wine and brandy in sufficient quantity to meet the demand—which is not confined to California nor to America, but, such have been the improvements effected in the manufacture, that, large quantities are exported to France.

The Hermit tasted some samples, and has no hesitation in saying that some hock which he tried was exceedingly fine, and wanted nothing but age. The same with the brandy, of which the manager politely presented a bottle to him to bring to London for his friends to taste; and here it has been pronounced by connoisseurs to be equal to any French brandy of the same age, and superior to much which comes to this country from France. And judging by all he saw, and all he could learn of the business, he considers it certain, that the Californian wine manufacture will quickly develop into a highly important trade; and that the extinction of any existing prejudices against the wine will be effected by its increasing excellence.

The country is admirably adapted for the production of the raw material, and those in the trade possess the capital and skill, to ensure excellence in the manufactured article.

Mr. Rose has three distilleries, and at the Mission of San Gabriel he has 2,000 acres of land, so situated that he can irrigate the whole of it. Twelve hundred

acres are fenced in—and besides fruit, he grows wheat, barley and oats, and keeps a stud of high bred horses.

In his orchard, orange and lemon trees may be counted by the thousand, and other fruit trees by the hundred—these latter include almonds, apples, pears, peaches, apricots, nectarines, pomegranates, figs, chestnuts, and olives, and English walnuts.

This undertaking is so perfect in its organisation, that it goes on without the least friction ; all that the proprietor has to do is to invest his overflowing profits ; while he leads the life of a country gentleman, as many such men do who are engaged, as he is, in the vast production of such fruits as thrive in this climate.

Between the two establishments thus referred to, one belonging to Mr. Cogswell, of New York, and the other to Mr. Rose, there is the extensive farm, of some 36,000 acres, belonging to Mr. Baldwin, of San Francisco, who is the proprietor of the Baldwin Hotel, which cost with its furniture £600,000. This leviathan man of business keeps his gigantic hotel supplied daily with provisions of all kinds, furnished from his farm, on which he breeds cattle, sheep, hogs, and race-horses of the highest class. All his transactions are on an extensive scale, and he is, besides, a large grower of grapes, oranges, lemons, and all fruits for which the district is famous.

He is also a distiller, and has a high reputation for his wines and brandies, which are exported in considerable quantities; and, as if all this were not sufficient, he is the owner of about 100,000 acres of land in the occupation of tenants, in different parts of the State. Such is the amazing spirit of enterprise,

examples of which come under one's notice in this great country.

Returning to Los Angeles—the town of the Angels,—the Hermit dined in the evening at the “Pico House,” and afterwards took a seat on a chair in front of it, on the foot pavement; and while having a quiet smoke, and reading a newspaper, given to him by mine host, was a listener and an observer of local habits and customs.

The impressions received this day produced a feeling of astonishment that such a district of Southern California should have remained undeveloped till the present time. A field almost without limit for the profitable employment of capital and labour; rich beyond measure, as regards the fertility of the soil, to say nothing of the boundless metalliferous riches existing beneath the surface; within 3,000 miles of New York, and 6,000 miles from London. To talk in Europe of thousands on thousands wanting employment and bread to eat, and farmers in distress, seems like a mockery, and induces the question, Why need it be?

The land of Southern California now lying fallow, is only waiting to be tickled into fertility, to maintain those who may come to work it, and supply, at a good profit, the food markets of Europe, at much less cost than Europe can supply food from its own soil, which is overlaid with burdens, and the fertility of which, has to be stimulated by artificial and expensive aids.

CHAPTER IX.

ARIZONA, NEW MEXICO, KANSAS AND ST. LOUIS.

AVING thus obtained an insight into the resources of the district, the Hermit retired to rest, and after breakfast, the next morning, bidding adieu to Dr. Norman R. Griswold, one of the obliging proprietors of the Pico House, he took the train going south. By this, he crossed Arizona, a country, which he would advise everybody, at all afraid of heat, not to venture into, for he found his thermometer indicating a degree with which he had previously had no experience, namely, 110° in the shade ; this was not comfortable. But he crossed the hot plains, which lay considerably below the level of the sea, in a spirit of quiet submission ; and in due course, found himself in New Mexico, several thousand feet higher than sea level.

At about the time the Hermit was passing through this State, a highwayman was tried, and found guilty of a crime, so atrocious in its character, that the judge considered the penalty provided by the law to be inadequate as a punishment ; and as he could not find either precedent or authority for a sentence of imprisonment for *life*, he committed the man to 99 years confinement in a penitentiary ; and thus got over the little difficulty.

Here the passengers learned the exciting fact that the Indians were out on the "war path" in the country the

train was passing through; and such was the risk, that a military guard, consisting of several men and two officers, were taken on board our train; they were well armed with loaded rifles and furnished with plenty of cartridges in their waist belts. Quite an exciting episode for a quiet tourist like the Hermit, but men of his age and class are not easily disturbed or alarmed; and so in this case, he availed himself of the opportunity of obtaining information, from the officer in command; in a quiet chat at night, after the other passengers had retired, on the vexed question of the "Indians' wrongs."

This chat resulted in a conviction that blame is fairly attributable to both sides in these perpetually recurring differences; and let the errors of the past be what they may, it seems idle to expect permanent peace, on the condition of these various tribes of Indians keeping within the reservations which have been assigned to them; cooped up, as it were, in limited space, altogether unequal to their natural wants, and partly dependent on government support. They are expected to conform to laws binding on citizens, while denied the privileges of citizenship, a vain and unreasonable expectation; and the Hermit concluded that while this unequal balance is maintained, the poor Indians will continue to be troublesome, and oblige the government to employ armed force to punish infractions of the law, and protect settlers, who may be sufferers from the retaliatory natives, who, justly or unjustly, feel themselves aggrieved.

After passing through Arizona and over the heights of New Mexico, in neither of which States can the Hermit advise an English farmer to pitch his tent, a

corner of Colorado was crossed; and with this State he had no opportunity of making personal acquaintance, but, from all he could learn, it seems to be beautiful to an uncommon degree, a happy hunting ground for the admirer of grand and charming natural scenery, for the miner, the farmer, and the stock breeder, the sportsman, and the seeker after health, a land in which the hand of time is said to be arrested, so far as human life is concerned, and in which the painter and the poet may revel with delight.

The next place of importance, worth mentioning, after travelling in sleeping cars four days and four nights consecutively, was Kansas city. This commercial centre has a very rough business focus, and outside this, there are charming suburban residences, standing in the prettiest of pretty gardens and beautifully kept.

It is a lively city, inhabited by very mixed society, not too particular as to manners and customs ; whisky bars and beer saloons appeared to be thriving institutions, and sharp fellows seemed to be pretty much at home there, and after his survey, the Hermit came to the conclusion, that folks who have not cut their eye teeth would do well to think twice about it, before deciding on settling there, or anywhere near it.

Having obtained at a Land Agency office, opposite the railway dépôt, a parcel of papers giving an account of farming operations and disposable farms, so that he might bring home information which may be useful to others, the Hermit went on his way that night for St. Louis, at which city he arrived the next morning at eight o'clock.

Here he found an agricultural fair going on in full

swing, the city so full of visitors that not a bed was to be had at the monster hotel he stopped at, except one in a double-bedded room ; this did not suit his ideas, therefore he declined the luxury, and resolved on spending the day only, in this great and thriving city, and going on again at night in a sleeping car.

This annual fair, or agricultural show, as it would be called in England, was the twenty-first since its establishment by an association. The stimulating influence of premiums to the amount of 50,000 dollars, was given this year as prizes to exhibitors.

The fair is held on grounds admirably suited to the purpose, and comprises a zoological department, which is a permanent establishment, after the fashion of the Zoological Gardens in the Regent's Park, but not so extensive.

The Hermit wandered about these grounds with the multitude, looking at the live stock and the mechanical exhibits, and came to the conclusion that, after all, the Christmas show at Islington can hold its own in the race as regards the excellence of live stock of all kinds, and agricultural machinery also, and as to the latter, Englishmen can lick the Americans in prime cost.

One peculiar attraction took the Hermit's fancy, and it was announced in the official catalogues thus :—

" At two o'clock a band of Modoc Indians, in full war costume, will appear in the amphitheatre, give chase, and capture an Indian bride, and perform other horse-back exercises. They are in charge of ' Muskogee.' formerly chief under ' Sitting Bull.' "

The city was *en fête*, and on the previous night, brilliantly illuminated ; the Gas Company and the electric

light promoters, both embraced the coveted opportunity of showing what they could do. The electricians, with the courage of lions, "wired up" and threw down the gauntlet, which was at once picked up by the gasmen, who were threatened with annihilation. But the electricians disregarded the injunction, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow," and came to grief, for by common consent, gas had by far the best of it, and nobly held its own.

The electric lights were, as they very often are, decidedly refractory, winking, and blinking, and going out, in spite of the applied skill of the experts in charge of the ways and means of producing cold moonshine; and it was amusing to find the electricians finding fault with the Gas Company, for giving too much light by means of Sugg's burners, and so, overshadowing their arcs, which would otherwise have been arcs of triumph.



CHAPTER X.

PITTSBURG, PHILADELPHIA, NEW YORK AND BOSTON.

FTER a four o'clock dinner at his hotel, the Hermit started that evening at 6.55 for Cincinnati, where he arrived the next morning at 8.30, and put up at the Gibson House. Here he spent a quieter day than the day before. He visited the Exposition, which was then open, and the Zoological Gardens, took a drive into the suburbs of the city, and ascended the heights by means of a wire-rope railway ; a car is drawn very smoothly up an inclined plane, and let down again, by powerful machinery, working an endless wire-rope. A fine view of the city is thus obtained with a minimum of fatigue.

The afternoon was spent wandering about the streets, and after dining, the Hermit bid adieu to Cincinnati at 8.30, in a sleeper, arriving at Pittsburg at 8 o'clock the next morning.

Here, quite another kind of interest was awakened ; coal, iron, and steel, constitute the chief industries of busy Pittsburg ; but, unlike our Sheffield, Pittsburg is not strong enough to leave the nursery and fight its own way in the world. It cannot make a steel rail which can face an English rail without shrinking ; the life of an American steel rail being seven years, and that of an English rail, twenty-one ! This fact, the Hermit learned

from a practical man—an American too—who fills the important post of Superintendent of 1,400 miles of railroad belonging to one Company, and who has occupied this post for twenty years.

This man's experience of steel rails dates from the year 1868, when the chairman of his Company bought some 200 tons of steel rails, of Browne & Co., at Sheffield, and he laid them down as soon as they were delivered ; the next year 5,000 tons were bought of the same firm, and at this day all these rails, having been subjected to all the traffic of the line for 13 years and 12 years respectively, are nearly as good as when first laid ; whereas, American steel rails have been worn out on the same road in $6\frac{1}{2}$ years.

These are the rails that are protected by the paternal Government, in the interests of the American people, so that they may have the proud satisfaction of paying 30 per cent. more for a thing than they could otherwise buy it for. Well, if they like it, other people have no business to complain. They can afford, for the present, to play such fantastic tricks, and unduly increase the cost of every commodity, because they are not only a great, but an exuberantly rich country; corn, and oil, and wine, and gold, and silver, and the constantly increasing herds of cattle on their boundless prairies and plains ; all producing wealth which cannot be counted, cause the people to be comparatively independent of those economic laws which they now disregard.

But the natural effect of persistence in the application of such unsound doctrines, as now prevail among American politicians, becomes strikingly manifest, if this rich country be compared with a poor one like

Germany, where the same want of proper regard to sound principles, has been and is the order of the day; under the pilotage of a statesman, whose powerful guiding hand has carried into execution, laws and regulations under which commerce has been almost ruined, prosperity has departed, and the Nation depleted of her industrious population.

After having wandered about the smoky, bustling, busy, and thriving city of Pittsburg, the Hermit was agreeably surprised, by being recognised and warmly greeted at his hotel, the "Monongahela House," by a lady and gentleman, friends from Blackheath. How pleasant such unexpected greetings are, when friends or acquaintances thus meet in strange lands!

Nearly two days were spent in this rough place, and then, the rail was taken for Philadelphia. At this city of elegancies and refinement, the Hermit arrived at 6 o'clock a.m., after a comfortable night in a "Pulman Sleeper." What would be done by travellers in this country of long distances, without these clever contrivances of Mr. Pulman, it is difficult to imagine.

All the world knows that Philadelphia is famed for its high position in Art, Science and Literature; that, considered structurally, it is a modern Athens, that in all respects, as regards its general features, it has only one competitor in the United States, and with which its honours are proudly shared—that envied city is Boston in Massachusetts.

But, although all this is well-known, it remains for the Hermit to give expression to his admiration of an edifice not yet completed, but which will be the crowning glory of Philadelphia; an architectural monument, grand in

its conception, and so solid in construction, that it will endure for ages to come.

This may be briefly described as a magnificent building inclosing a courtyard or quadrangle. The entire structure will contain 520 rooms, providing stately accommodation for all the Departments of the City Government—Legislative, Executive, and Judicial; and for additional purposes and requirements which may have to be provided for hereafter.

The vast extent of this building may be imagined, when the fact is stated, that the actual floor room included within the walls, covers a superficial area of $14\frac{1}{2}$ acres, all under one roof; and the courtyard has an area of $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres.

The lighting, heating, and ventilating arrangements are as complete in all their details as human ingenuity, aided by practical experience, can possibly make them.

The cost of this immense building, up to the end of 1881, may be stated in round numbers to amount to something over seven millions of dollars.

It was the Hermit's good fortune, when in this city, to make the acquaintance of the President of the Commissioners for the erection of this building, Mr. Samuel C. Perkins, under whose fostering and constant care it has been erected. This gentleman, who is a Grand Master Mason, kindly took the Hermit over the principal parts of the vast pile, and explained the details of numerous noticeable points. This survey was highly gratifying, and deeply impressed the Hermit with the magnitude, boldness, and perfection of the design; the harmony of its various parts, and the masterly execution of the work.

Having thus made himself tolerably familiar with some of the chief objects of interest in this first class city, and obtained a few photographic mementos of his visit, the Hermit took the train for New York, where he arrived at about 5.40 p.m., thus completing a railroad tour of about 7,000 miles.

At the terminus of the railway, he was met by his daughter-in-law and his grandson, and taken by them to their home at Brooklyn; there to recount, in the family circle, the toils, the pleasures, and the many memorable incidents of a journey, across the great continent, which, on that side of the Atlantic is without a parallel, in a country, marvellous for its resources, its rapid development, and the enterprise of its people.

The Hermit having accomplished his main object of crossing the country on its northern side, and returning in safety by a southern route, and having thus performed this great journey in a short space of time, took a few days' rest in a quiet retreat, and then saw a little more of New York.

The intercommunications between this City and the City of Brooklyn, at present, are solely by means of enormous ferry-boats crossing the Hudson River, which separates the two. Two additional means of crossing this great water highway have, however, long been in contemplation, and both are in course of being realised.

One of these is a suspension bridge, so high up in the air, as to impress the mind of a beholder with an idea of its being inadequate for the traffic it is intended to carry, so aërial does it appear to be. It has, however, been designed by commanding genius, and its strength calculated in accord with well-known data, and wanting

nothing so much, it is said, for its completion, as a sufficient supply of the more precious metal to induce the delivery of the steel of which it is being constructed.

The design is characteristic of the country; nothing is too vast for the American mind to grasp. Greatness pervades the continent, and great ideas possess the spirit of the people. It has been said that the dining room in one of their monster hotels, is so vast, that the head waiter has to ride on horseback in it, so as to get from one end to the other in time, to save the inconvenience which would be felt by the guests if they had to wait while he walked. But the Hermit cannot endorse this statement, not having seen the room nor the horse marine.

The second scheme for superseding the ferry steam-boats, is to carry the traffic by railway, tramway, or by common carriages, through a tunnel under the Hudson; both these schemes are well advanced, and are within measurable distance of completion. It cannot be doubted that the vast traffic between the two cities demands such accommodation, and, when provided, the relief cannot fail to be an immense boon.

The next great conception, which attracted the Hermit's notice, was Mr. Vanderbilt's house in the Fifth Avenue. The following is an account of it, copied from a paper published in San Francisco:—

" William H. Vanderbilt's house, when completed, will be the finest in America, if not in the world. A New York correspondent thus describes it :—

" The house is on the corner of Fifty-second Street and Fifth Avenue. The ground is 200 feet square, and cost \$1,140,000. A vestibule or portico, connects the

house with those of his daughters, on either hand. In front of this vestibule is laid the enormous side-walk slab of blue-stone, 15 feet wide and 25 feet long, which cost \$5,000. At the entrance of the vestibule, facing the avenue, are to swing the famous bronze gates, or doors, ordered in Europe at a cost of \$20,000. The entrance hall is small, barely 12 feet wide, and lands the visitor in a square hall, out of which open the library, drawing-room, and parlour on the east or Fifth Avenue side ; the dining-room on the south ; the picture-gallery or ball-room on the west. To the north are the entrance-hall, of which I speak, and the grand staircase. The chief feature of the hall, which is 30 feet square, is a monumental fire-place and chimney-piece, 20 feet wide and reaching to the ceiling. It is of mahogany and Egyptian marble, and is said to have occupied 11 men for two years. The parlour, library and drawing-room are 25 feet square each, and are finished respectively in cherry, ebony and mahogany. The finish of the wood-work is so perfect that it is like velvet to the touch. Through all the rooms, and through the whole house in fact, the magnificence is monotonous. Every room has its chimney-piece, upon which a fortune has been lavished in the way of carving. Throughout the first and second floors there is not one inch of plaster wall to be seen, the walls from floor to ceiling, being panelled with marble, wood, leather, or tapestry. Up stairs, silk and satin are the chief wall-covering ; down stairs, it is marble and wood. The dining-room, a superb apartment, 36 feet long by 28 feet wide, has a chimney-piece almost as big as a house, and buffets of oak to match. The whole room is

panelled in oak, minutely carved in most superb style, at a cost of \$160 for every square yard, the cost of the wood-carving for this room alone footing up \$37,000. Sixteen panels in the walls will contain paintings of sporting scenes, fish, and game, by famous artists. The butler's pantry is a room 18 feet square, finished in a style which would be considered very costly for a handsome drawing-room, and contains five ponderous steel safes, built into the walls, to contain, I suppose, the service of solid gold which Vanderbilt is said to have ordered in Paris. The elevator is not yet in place. It is said to be an exact copy, on a big scale, of a silver jewel-box made for Diane de Poitiers. It will be seen from all four sides, as it rises and falls at one side of the main staircase, and will be entirely of fretted silver, lined with silk cushions. The main staircase is of oak, 13 feet wide, and presents an exceedingly beautiful and novel feature. Each rise of the steps contains two long panels, one on each side of the strip of Persian stair carpet. These panels are to be filled with paintings, done in France, at a cost of \$100 a-piece. Each one is 6 inches wide by 2 feet long. There are eighty of them in all. Mrs. Vanderbilt's bed-room will be a wonder, if only on account of the painting for the ceiling, ordered from Lefebvre, the Frenchman, for \$32,000. It represents the dawn of day. The room is finished in amaranthe and white marble, and hung with white silk. The other rooms are only a little less magnificent. There are eight rooms on the first floor, eleven on the second, and sixteen on the third. Not one of these thirty-five rooms on the first three floors cost less than \$4,000 to finish. The chandeliers—including one of solid silver, weighing half

a ton—for the ball-room or picture gallery, are now being made by Barbedienne, of Paris. Vanderbilt has two of Herter's men scouring Europe for whatever may be unique in furniture. Cost is said to be of no importance whatever."

The Hermit, having seen a little more of New York, next visited the important city of Boston, whose 250th anniversary was celebrated on the 17th September, 1880. The home of those pilgrims who, for conscience' sake, left their native land in the 'Mayflower,' and "landed on Plymouth Rock, amid the snows and ice of a New England winter, one hundred and one emigrants, weary, worn, and tempest-tost, but brave, hopeful, and undaunted."

What a city! What a history! What struggles for life and liberty! And to-day this proud city exists, as one vast monument of greatness, power, and glory; built on foundations of righteous integrity of purpose, and manly independence; laid by men who nobly went forth from the land of their fathers, a land which, at that unhappy period of its history, was governed cruelly and despotically by men, who, although they may be allowed to have been animated by patriotic motives, can only be described as obstinate and blind bigots.

The Hermit wandered about the streets of this city with feelings of deep interest, and gazed on landmarks which connected much of the past with the present. The "Old South Church," for instance, hallowed as it is by association with stirring events in history, and Bunker's Hill, the battle-field on which the Hermit stood and looked around, conjuring up visions of the bravery there displayed by citizen soldiers, who

astonished the world by their valour, and afterwards achieved enduring glory and secured a lasting triumph, ungrudged by any Englishman of the present generation.

It is not too much to say that in American affairs, and in all eventful periods of the political and social life of the Great Country, the voice of Boston has always been heard, and her great influence for good has on all occasions been felt.

Many grand institutions have been planted, and solidly established, mainly by the public spirit and wise forethought of her sons.

It is claimed, and has not been disputed, that Boston established the first church, the first free school, and the first college; built the first vessel, and the first hotel; set up the first printing press, and constructed the first railroad, on the Continent of America.

There is a beautiful park in the centre of the city, and with loving pride the people call it "our Boston Common." The Hermit regarded it as the Hyde Park of Boston.

The city has one hundred and seventy-one free schools, and the largest public library on the Continent. The Hermit had the honour of being shown over this latter institution by the President of the Board of Trustees, who most courteously and kindly directed his attention to many of the priceless literary treasures which it contains.

There are also two hundred and sixteen churches; and six hundred and sixty-six charitable, religious, literary, scientific, and art societies.

In the city, architecture shows up exceedingly well in every way; and in the suburbs, variety, beauty,

elegance, and refinement, are combined with the picturesque, harmoniously and delightfully.

Now for a peep into Canada; and to get this the Hermit took a night train from Boston to Montreal.

This cold, hard, ungenial, unimpulsive, granitic city, was reached in the afternoon at 3.30 p.m., instead of 8.30 a.m., just seven hours over time. Everything is fast in the United States, and it seemed to the Hermit that everything was slow in Canada; but it might be, that he was unfortunate in his first experiences in this hybrid kind of country, which is neither English nor American, a poor sort of imitation;—not exactly a sham, but, not the real thing;—deficient in *grit*, push-on go-aheadness. However, it is not the Hermit's habit to say unkind things of "any other man," and if he cannot say any good of an individual, or an institution, or a country, why then he says "mum's the word," and so he will leave Montreal and Canada, undescribed until he may have an opportunity of penetrating into its interior under more favourable circumstances.

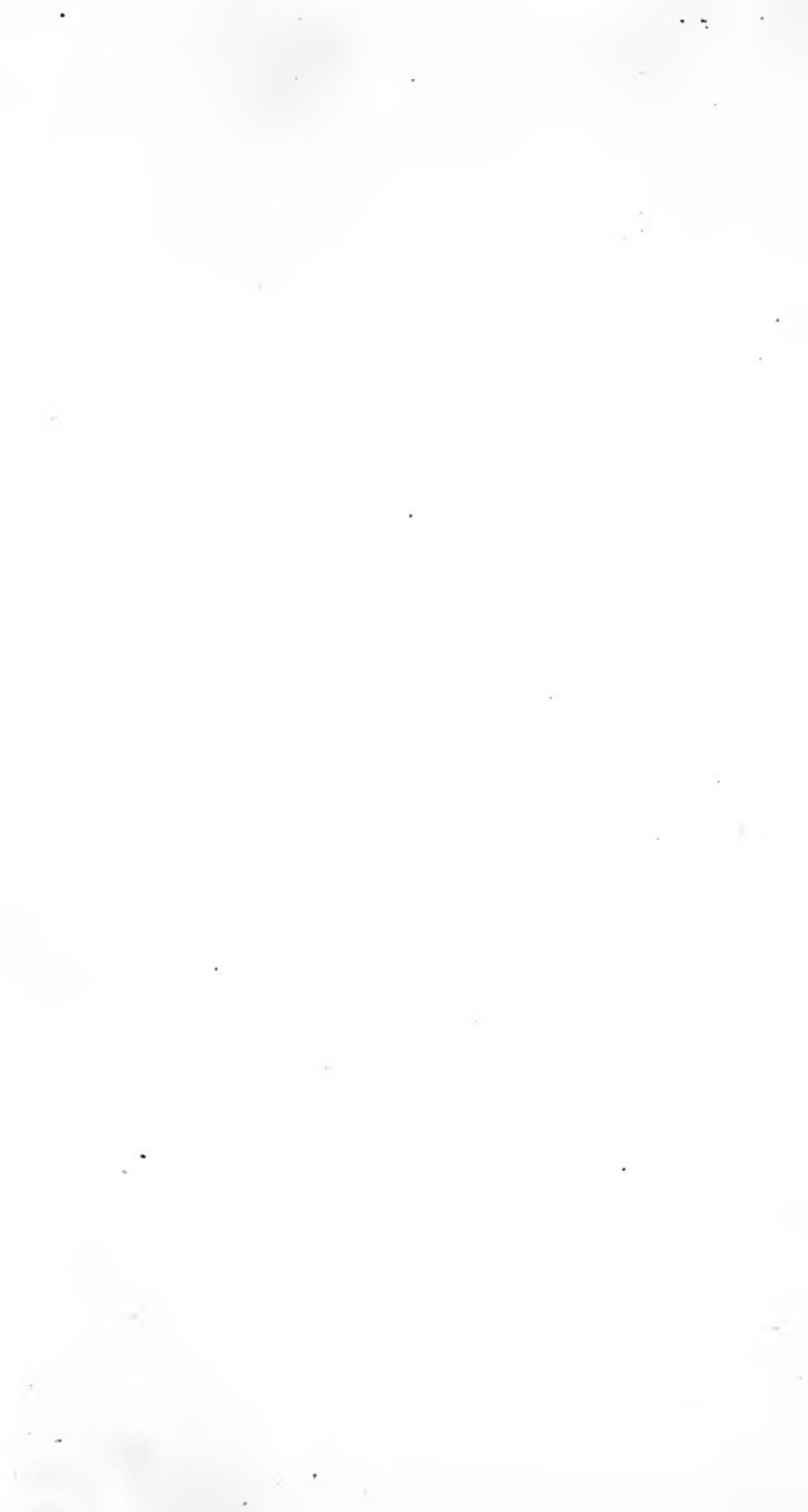
Having had this little peep, the Hermit retraced his steps to New York, and from thence in a few days set sail for Liverpool, where he arrived after a fairly pleasant voyage. His first feeling on landing, being one of deep gratitude for mercies enjoyed, through a period of fourteen weeks, and a tour of some 15,000 miles. He has nothing to be more thankful for, than the constantly-recurring courtesies, and genuine, hearty hospitality of Americans, who, from one end of this continent to the other, made his sojourn in their country exceedingly agreeable by their geniality.

People who read daily newspapers, and current litera-

ture, cannot avoid coming across evidences which prove, that, for selfish or political ends, unkind words and thoughts are not unfrequently expressed by office-holders or office-seekers, reflecting on Englishmen ; but let nobody hereafter attempt to make the Hermit believe in anything incompatible with the fact, that, in America and in England, there is an increasing and undying spirit of brotherly love, existing, and taking deeper and deeper root, between the American and the English people.

21, PARLIAMENT STREET,
WESTMINSTER,
February, 1882.





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